

Federal Foster Care Reimbursement Program

The Loudoun County Federal Foster Care Reimbursement (FFCR) Program is a Department of Family Services (DFS) program that is jointly administered by the Departments of Family Services and Financial Services. It is overseen by a Steering Committee chaired by the Director of Family Services and includes Directors from all participating Departments, County Administration, and the Loudoun County Public Schools.

This Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) coordinated program was initiated in FY 02 by the County to claim federal reimbursement under Title IV-E for case management and administrative activities that prevented foster care placements in addition to the reimbursements already being received for the cost of maintaining children in foster care. At the program's inception, VDSS rules allowed reimbursement for efforts to prevent any kind of out of home placement, not just foster care per se, including incarceration, mental hospitals, the youth shelter, and group homes. Several county agencies that work with children who are at risk of any of these kinds of out of home placement, including the Juvenile Court Services Unit (JCSU), Mental Health and Substance Abuse (MHSA) programs and certain DFS programs, have been claimed.

One feature of this federal program is that reimbursement funds are "recyclable," so any programs funded by FFCR are also claimable if they meet the eligibility guidelines. In effect, therefore, any programs funded by FFCR that are also eligible for reimbursement through FFCR, have a lower net cost. Most programs and positions funded through the Loudoun FFCR program have been recyclable.

Program rules from VDSS have changed over the years as the program has developed, so the Steering Committee has been cautious in committing funds to programs to ensure that there would be no possible future county liability. In the fall of 2003, the Steering Committee recommended eight new positions (8.0 FTE) which were created by the Board of Supervisors to begin in April 2004. These new positions and the partial year replacement of the federal grant for School Probation Officers were included in the FY 05 Adopted Budget.

In the spring of 2004, VDSS announced that Federal auditors were reviewing program guidelines and that changes were possible. By the fall of 2004 it became clear that the changes being implemented would be significant, likely reducing program revenues by about three-quarters. As a result, the FFCR Steering Committee eliminated funding for five positions in MHSA and two positions in DSS immediately (effective second quarter FY 05). Several of these positions had not been filled and vacant positions were available for the employees in the positions that were filled. One of these unfunded positions was transferred to the Sheriff's Office and one was transferred to General Services, both to be used for building security functions.

The Steering Committee also eliminated funding for the School Probation Officer program as of the end of FY 05 and the CSA Manager position was moved to the CSA Fund beginning in FY 06. The FY 07 Adopted Fiscal Plan moves the remaining FFCR positions to local tax funding. Future appropriations will occur subsequent to adoption of the annual budget as FFCR funding is awarded.

FEDERAL FOSTER CARE REIMBURSEMENT FUNDS PROJECTED BUDGET SCHEDULE	
Description	FY 07 Adopted
Revenue	\$0
Expenditures	\$0
Surplus (+)/Deficit (-)	\$---